That which is claimed is:

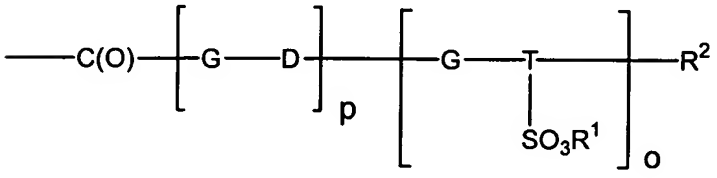
1. A comb polymer that is water-soluble, water-dispersible, or both, comprising a polymer main chain and polyester side-arms which contain sulfonic acid groups and which are linked to said polymer main chain via ester groups, wherein said side-arms have been at least partially neutralized by sodium and lithium cations, wherein the molar ratio of lithium to sodium is between 0.1 and 50.

2. The comb polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the molar ratio of lithium to sodium is between 0.5 and 25.

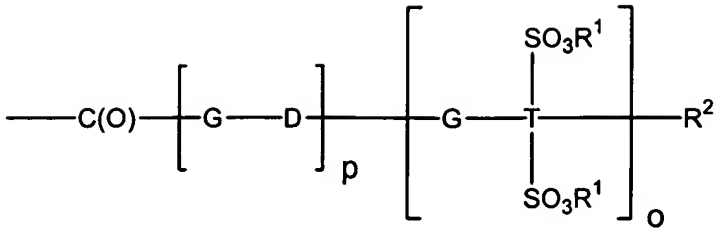
3. The comb polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the polymer main chain comprises at least one polymer selected from the group consisting of polyacrylic acid, polymethacrylic acid, esters of polyacrylic acid, esters of polymethacrylic acid, polymaleic acid, polymaleic anhydride, and polyfumaric acid.

4. The comb polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the polymer main chain comprises at least one ester of polyacrylic acid or polymethacrylic acid with a C_1 to C_{22} aliphatic, cycloaliphatic or aromatic alcohol.

5. The comb polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the polyester side-arms comprise at least one polyester selected from the group consisting of:

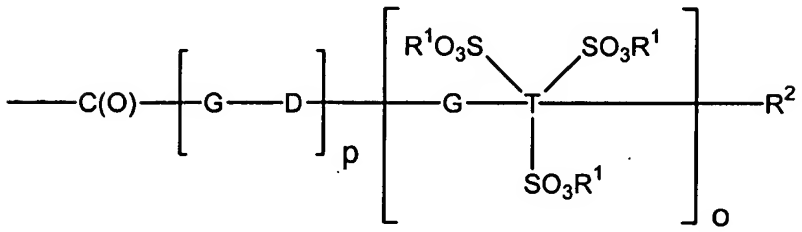


Formula I



Formula II

and

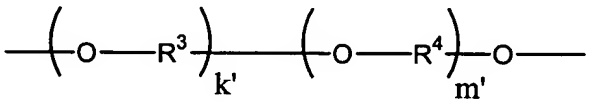


Formula III

wherein:

p and o represent the number of repeating monomer units;

G is selected from the group consisting of C_2 to C_{22} aromatic, aliphatic and cycloaliphatic organyl units containing at least two terminal oxygen atoms and derivatives of a polyglycol of the formula $HO-[R^3-O]_{k'}-[R^4-O]_{m'}-H$, corresponding to an organyl unit



wherein R^3 and R^4 are each C_2-C_{22} alkylene radicals, and are the same or different and $k'+m' \geq 1$;

D is selected from the group consisting of C_2 to C_{22} aromatic, aliphatic and cycloaliphatic organyl units containing at least two terminal acyl groups;

T is selected from the group consisting of sulphonated aromatic, aliphatic and cycloaliphaic organyl radicals containing at least two terminal acyl groups;

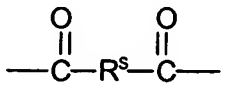
at least some of said R^1 are lithium and sodium cations, and optionally at least some of said R^1 are cations different from lithium and sodium cations; and

R^2 is selected from the group consisting of:

- aromatic, aliphatic and cycloaliphatic amino functional radicals including a $-NH-R^5$ or $-NR^5_2$ group, wherein R^5 is selected from the group consisting of C_1 to C_{22} alkyl and aryl radicals;
- aromatic, aliphatic and cycloaliphatic organyl radicals bridged via ether functions $-O-R^5$, wherein R^5 is the same as defined above;
- mono- or polyethoxylated sulphonated organyl radicals having the formula $-(O-CH_2-CH_2)_s-SO_3R^1$, wherein $s \geq 1$; and
- polyalkoxy compounds bridged via ether functions of the formula $-O-[R^7-O]_q-[R^8-O]_r-Y$, wherein R^7 and R^8 are each independently selected from the group consisting of C_2 to C_{22} alkyl radicals and are the same or different, Y is hydrogen or a C_1-C_{22} aliphatic radical, and $q+r \geq 1$.

6. The comb polymer according to Claim 5, wherein said one or more additional cations of R^1 are selected from the group consisting of potassium, magnesium, calcium, ammonium, monoalkylammonium, dialkylammonium, trialkylammonium and tetraalkylammonium, wherein the alkyl positions of the ammoniums, independently of one another, comprise a C_1 to C_{22}-alkyl radical and 0 to 3 hydroxyl groups.

7. The comb polymer according to Claim 5, wherein D comprises an organyl unit of the formula:



wherein R^S is a C_2 to C_{22} aromatic, linear or cyclic, saturated or unsaturated, aliphatic bifunctional radical.